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ABSTRACT

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methodology to analyze whether mentoring is related to student satisfaction and whether different elements of mentoring are important to different groups, particularly African American and Anglo-American graduate students at predominantly white institutions. A survey completed by 96 students, including 44 African-American and 24 Anglo-Americans, asked students to evaluate satisfaction with their institution, with mentoring functions received at their institution and who rendered these services, and with student perception of mentoring. Findings indicated that 50 percent of participants had a faculty mentor; that black students received far fewer services from faculty members than did Anglo students; and that 16 percent of African American and 30 percent of Anglo students reported having an excellent mentoring relationship. Of the 12 mentoring functions significantly related to satisfaction, those with the highest correlation included: providing knowledge, experience, and professionalism; providing an introduction into professional networks; and giving constructive criticism of student academic progress. Appendices list mentoring functions. (Contains 90 references.) (DB)

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# Satisfaction and Mentoring: An African American Perspective

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**This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held in Miami, Florida, November 5-8, 1998. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.**

## Introduction

In the late eighteenth century Thomas Jefferson stressed the importance of education in sustaining a free nation. He articulated that a free society could not prevail with ignorant citizenry (Anderson, 1988). He proposed legislation that offered an educational option for all white children which included college for the brightest white males at the public's expense. Jefferson's foresight was well beyond his time. He knew that a literate population would only enhance the prosperity of our nation.

Unfortunately, Jefferson's earnest interest in the education of our nation was not offered to African Americans. African Americans were considered second class citizens and were not deemed suitable for literacy (Anderson, 1988). The very idea of African Americans becoming literate was a slap in the face of white superiority. Lawrence Cremin (1970) wrote . . . "the doors of wisdom were not only not open, they were shut tight and designed to remain that way" (p. 411). Unfortunately, nearly two centuries later, little has changed. The barriers to higher education for African Americans are blatantly visible. Bell (1992) exclaimed history has purposefully delivered delusions and inequities to African Americans. Its promise of a just education is seen by many African Americans only as another broken promise. Sedlacek (1987) confirms the African American exclusion from higher education proclaiming racism as the primary catalyst.

It has been argued that African Americans are virtually an endangered species in academe (Astin, 1982, Blackwell, 1989, 1981, Littleton, 1996). The African American dilemma has reached epidemic proportions (McJamerson, 1991) and reflects a crisis situation (Wiley, 1990; Garibaldi, 1992). Many professionals have written them off as "uneducable and wasted human resources" (Jones et al, 1994), leaving the African American student in search of programs that are willing to be accepting of his differences and academic needs.

## Social Significance

There has been an abundance of qualitative and quantitative research on the factors that contribute to the academic success of students of color (Gossett et al, 1996; Astin, 1984). Turner (1994) speaks of the "level of comfort" (p. 355) on campus attributing to the success of students of color. Tinto (1987) states that students will remain in school if they feel as if they belong. However, the plague of indifference between African American students and their educational environment continues to present obstacles to forming a positive comfort zone (Allen, 1988). Feelings of not belonging, campus hostility and alienation continue to exacerbate the decline of African Americans in higher education.

Smedley, Myers, & Harrell (1993) state these negative experiences are significantly different from the stresses experienced by nonAfrican American students; he considers them to be minority status stresses. In a study of 161 minority freshmen students, Smedley et al concluded African Americans reported a significantly higher mean stress level than any other ethnic group. It also confirmed these stressors played an important role in the adaptation of the student to their new institution and contributed to their negative feelings of well-being. Although Smedley's study dealt with college freshmen, he generalized that many students of color also felt similar feelings of isolation and discontent.

In Policy Perspectives, Daniels (1991) points out that history has maintained that people of color are only guests in the house of education. They cannot feel comfortable because they do not have the same rights and status of those who are considered family. "We feel that we're guests in someone else's house, that we can never relax and put our feet up on the table (p. 5). Turner's (1994) study on campus climate at the University of Minnesota found students of color overwhelmingly declared the climate to be "unwelcome". Many faculty of color found racism to be the core of the problem. Shea (cited in Smith's handout, 1997) vividly explored the racial tension on the campuses of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Massachusetts, where students acknowledged blatant and voluntary perpetuation of institutional racism. Nettles (1990)

proclaims in his study on differences among graduate students that more than any other ethnicity, African Americans are in the greatest need of a welcoming environment. The unwelcome, hostile environment continues to plague higher education today, further perpetuating the decline of African Americans, particularly African Americans in academe.

**Contextual Significance**

The decision to enter a graduate study program is one of the most crucial steps in an individual's career. It involves intense thought and consideration of one's lifelong goal and a driving internal force to become one of the best. Due to the seriousness of this pursuit, it has the potential to become one of the most frustrating and stressful times in the student's life, especially for the African American student. Thus, the student strives to "fit" in order to become a member of the elitist club.

The stumbling blocks to higher education for African Americans are still present today; however, a mountainous amount of motivation and an ounce of help from within the organization can enable the African American student to persist and become an integral part of academe. At most institutions, there are many support organizations that come to the aid of its students; however, for African Americans these organizations are usually conveniently unavailable or unable to meet their needs. These special service programs are usually administrated by student affairs offices, and their duties are sometimes limited. They attempt to aid African American students in overcoming discrimination and feelings of isolation (Faison, 1993). In addition to these services, they help students of color adjust to academic life, resolve financial and residence problems, and adjust to majority social values and customs (Livingston & Steward, 1987). African American students have long resisted these support services at predominantly white institutions (Livingston & Steward, 1987). Historically, African Americans have felt a lack of acceptance on such campuses (Faison, 1996). There is a lack of understanding for their presentational and interactional styles causing an extreme sense of social isolation, thus increasing the perception of non-student support.

Although mentoring provides the most crucial one-to-one relationship, it is most often lacking in the education arena. This relationship not allows the mentor to share his knowledge and experiences with the protégé, but gives the student a sense of belonging and caring. The transition from undergraduate student to graduate student can sometimes be a very stressful ordeal; therefore, the mentoring relationship would be immensely beneficial to the graduate and professional student. To compound this, many African Americans feel pressure and isolation related to attending a predominantly white institution. These students feel the university does not meet their needs, academically or socially, further necessitating a greater need for an effective mentor program.

## Background Statistics

According to the American Council on Education's Minorities in Higher Education (1994), African Americans made little progress in increasing graduate completion rates in the 1980's and 1990's. In 1980, African Americans were awarded 3.9 percent of all doctoral degrees; in 1986, the number of graduates declined to 3.1 percent; in 1993 (Thurgood & Clarke, 1995) the number decreased to 2.7 percent. In 1993, the Office of Scientific and Engineering Personnel (1995, cited in Faison, 1996) reported that only 1,106 out of 39,754 doctorates were awarded to African Americans. Although the raw number of African Americans receiving doctorate degrees have increased, the fact remains the attrition rate of African American graduate students on predominantly white campuses continues to escalate (Kraft, 1991, Faison, 1996). Faison (1993) suggests that faculty-mentoring programs are a possible solution to the African American graduate attrition problem at predominantly white institutions.

## Review of the Literature

### Definition of Mentoring

Although the concept of mentoring is not new, there is a lack of common understanding of its meaning (Jacobi, 1991, Daloz, 1986). Charles Willie (1991) states mentoring has so many multiple requirements that it is hard to find mentors because their

function is not clearly defined. Merriam (1983) contends that this lack of definition causes confusion among researchers as to what should be measured and what actually is deemed the success ingredient in student development. This lack of definition causes confusion on the part of both the student and the faculty member as to what the relationship should actually encompass.

Merriam (1983), Jacobi (1991), and Smith and Davidson (1992) acknowledge the ambiguous concept of the mentor phenomenon. Without a unified definition, it is difficult to identify and measure individual components of a successful mentoring relationship. Therefore, when empirical research is conducted, it is often difficult for valid comparisons to be made. Healy and Welchert (1990) confirm this lack of encyclopedic and functionability of traditional mentoring terms. Many times during research studies, the definition of mentoring does not correspond to actual observations made and does not distinguish between other forms of normal, everyday interactions.

Jacobi (1991) argues that the definition and practice of mentoring relationships is so diverse that forming an operational concept is extremely problematic. The length of the mentoring relationship and the degree of intimacy and intensity involved will help to assess the effectiveness and quality of the mentoring process; ultimately determining an operational definition will better characterize the role of the mentor and protégé.

Mentoring is derived from Homer's "The Odyssey" in which Mentor was entrusted to care for Odysseus' son Telemachus (World Book Encyclopedia, 1994). Researchers have taken this concept of caring and have conceptualized it into multiple meanings to assist protégés in their pursuit of their dreams and goals (Granovetter, 1972; Levinson, 1978; Blackwell,1989; Anderson and Shannon, 1988; Willie, 1991; Kohut, 1977 as cited in Mehlman and Glickauf-Hughes 1994; Daloz, 1986; Adams, 1992; Faison, 1996).

Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring can take many shapes and forms; therefore, there are many different types of mentor relationships. They can be totally accidental (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988) in

nature or can become formalized so that the student will know someone is purposely looking out for his best interest (Gerstein, 1985; Davidson, 1992). Mentor and Telemachus had a "one to one" relationship in which Mentor intentionally took responsibility for Telemachus. Selke and Wong (1994) agree that mentoring must be intentional. The mentor must make a genuine effort to help the inexperienced protégé reach his goals. The mentor is a caring adult who supports and protects the protégé (Allen-Sommerville, 1992). He looks out for his student's best interests.

Emillie Smith and William Davidson (1992) argue that those who had a definite mentor were more satisfied in their mentoring relationship than those who had a "diffuse" one. Gerstein (1985) asserts that the formal mentor program is extremely effective. This way, the student knows he will have someone who is "intentionally" looking out for his best interest even though he did not purposely chose the individual. Phillips-Jones (1983) explains that the main purpose of the formal mentoring program is to inform individuals who are not considered a part of the organization about its inside culture. Unfortunately, in formal mentoring, the relationship between the mentor and protégé is forced and could become detrimental to the protégé's development. Bower (1990, as cited in Faison, 1996) expresses concern about mentors being forced to participate in the mentoring process. He suggests that mentors should volunteer to participate in the formal mentoring program, thus decreasing any stress or pressure to perform. Kram (1985) agrees with Bower stating that formal mentoring is sometimes considered an intrusion by some faculty members and resentment for the student is many times the rule instead of the exception.

In contrast to Gerstein, Heinz Kohurt (1977, cited in Mehlman & Glickauf-Hughes, 1994) states that the mentoring relationship is the protégés' unconscious search for someone to satisfy his unmet developmental needs. It is not that the mentor took the responsibility to care, protect and guide the protégé; the protégé had a need to have someone care for him.

Also contradicting the theory of formal mentoring is the assumption that freedom of choice is a valued part of any successful relationship (Noe, 1988). Levinson (1978) states that the relationship between the mentor and protégé must be of such magnitude that the protégé begins to identify with the mentor. Many researchers suggest that mentoring relationships are ego sensitive; participants are chosen based on common, shared, individual characteristics such as gender, race or goal (Kram, 1983; Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike & Newman, 1984; Irvine, 1994). This informal arrangement allows individuals to choose someone with whom they are compatible. Kram (1983, as cited in Janice Henry, et. al, 1994) asserts that mentoring commences development in the initiation stage. During this stage, the protégé notices a competent individual from whom he would like to receive guidance and support, or the mentor recognizes an individual who has potential and warrants extra attention. Either the mentor or the potential protégé can navigate the relationship to blossom into a true mentoring experience. This relationship is not forced, but casual until both individuals feel comfortable with each other's commitment to the shared goal.

Unfortunately, due to the negative social experiences of African Americans at predominantly white institutions, it is highly probable the African American student will have difficulty initiating contact with potential mentors (Davis, 1994; Willie, et. al 1991; Smedley, et. al 1993; Nora & Cabrera 1996; Fisher & Hartmann, 1995). Nettles (1988) states African American students feel discriminated against by administrators, faculty and other students while attending predominantly white institutions. The students feel unwelcomed and isolated, resulting in their inability to interact with others who are not considered the minority.

Mentoring Models and Functions

Many researchers and scholars have formulated their own theory of what a mentoring relationship should encompass. Although most of these perceptions are based upon Telemachus' and Mentor's relationship, the concept has sometimes been expanded

upon and redirected to fit the researchers and scholars needs. The literature carries an abundance of models and functions; however, only a few will be covered at this time.

Mary Selke and Terrence Wong (1993) contend the main purpose of mentoring is to serve the psychosocial and the developmental needs of the protégé. This is established by placing nurturing as the foundation of the relationship, just as Mentor attempted to help Telemachus reach his full potential by placing Telemachus under his wing to show him the proper direction in his search for his father. Selke and Wong contend nurturing is the one component upon which all other components in their Mentoring-Empowered Model is based.

In the Mentoring-Empowered Model of Selke and Wong (1993), the nurturer influences the development of the protégé by performing specific functions. These functions (counselor, teacher, encourager, sponsor and role model) are intertwined together by the nurturer to facilitate an open and trusting relationship with the protégé that allows for the ultimate goal of growth and development. Clark (1988) states the relationship must be built slowly, but aggressively in order to receive optimal results. Protégés need to know that someone believes and has confidence in them so they may step out on a limb and take risks in order to become better scholars (Wolf, 1993, as cited in Bruce, 1995).

In contrast, Levinson (1978) states a mentor must be a mixture of a peer and a parent. He cannot remain a nurturer. If he does, the most advanced level of the relationship, that of a peer, cannot be fulfilled. The protégé must be given enough space so that he may grow. The object of the mentor relationship is for the protégé to shift from a child/parent relationship into an adult/peer relationship. The nurturer must let go in order for the protégé to fully develop and become an adult, ultimately rising to the intellectual level of his mentor. Therefore, the nurturer must be extremely careful to note when it is the appropriate time to "release the apron strings" so the mentoring relationship will have a positive effect on the protégé's development. Knowles (as stated in Faison, 1996) states the mentoring relationship must move from a dependent relationship to a more independent

and self-directed relationship. This occurs only through the maturation and growth of the protégé. Emerson (1962) asserts the whole concept of mentoring makes it difficult for the involved individuals not to become mutually dependent upon each other. The relationship is mutually respected and valued; therefore, a controlling person could not destroy the relationship. The ability to let the protégé spread his wings is not perceived as being problematic.

Auster (1984) contends that the mentoring relationship has the potential to promote role strains. This strain is enhanced by the mentor's and protégé's perceptions of the relationship as being extremely important. Although this strain is not necessarily detrimental to the protégé's development, it should be monitored in order to promote maximal cognitive and emotional growth of the individual.

Selk and Wong (1993) place the highest priority on the nurturing aspect of the mentoring relationship; Anderson and Ramey (1990) contend the mentor should first and foremost be a role model. The mentor gives the protégé a sense of who he wants to become (Levinson, 1978), thus, the protégé can see himself as a "twinship transference" of the mentor (Mehlman & Glickauf-Hughes, 1994). Gallimore et al (1990) contends that the mentor's responsibility lies in his ability to help the protégé develop areas that he would not be able to develop without the mentor's assistance. Protégés have a need to see a balance between who they are now and who they wish to become (Bruce, 1995). It is by this example that the mentor facilitates both growth and development by cuddling the protégé. Kohurt (1985, as cited in Mehlman & Glickauf-Hughes) tastefully stated, "You need other people to become yourself" (p. 43).

Anderson and Shannon (1988) partially share the view of Selk and Wong (1993) in relation to the mentoring partnership. They both agree that the mentor should be someone who recognizes ability and potential for growth in the protégé, and will facilitate an environment which will further develop the protégé's full potential. Adams (1992) states the protégé must also constructively add to the relationship. He must work on building a

relationship that is based on trust and respect. The mentor should not have to worry about whether the protégé is serious or not. The protégé must convey a willingness to learn and be totally receptive to advice and counsel.

The protégé adds to the partnership by showing the mentor that he is willing to go the extra mile and that the confidence that he holds for the protégé is highly warranted. Finally, the protégé must work with the mentor in developing realistic and attainable goals. These goals must be well-defined for the mentor as well as the protégé, if the partnership is to be considered equal.

In order for the protégé to reap the ultimate benefits of the partnership, a true mentoring relationship must be established. In Blackwell's 1986 study on Cross-Generational Experiences of Blacks in Graduate and Professional Schools, he proposed ten important characteristics a true mentoring relationship must engage: provide training, stimulate knowledge, provide information, provide emotional support, provide encouragement, socialize demands, inculcate a value system, provide informal instructions, help build self-confidence, and defend and protect the protégé. Blackwell's study (1986) concluded that only 12.7 percent of the 157 African American respondents had true mentors in graduate or professional school. Although over 45 percent of the respondents were characterized as having sponsors or advisors, they were not significant enough in the lives of the protégé to be identified as mentors.

Utilizing Blackwell's definition of a true mentor, Howard- Vital and Morgan (1993) surveyed members of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents indicated they were involved in some form of mentoring relationship. Those respondents who indicated having a mentor stated the most important function of their mentor was to instill self-confidence and motivate them to perform at their greatest potential. Others suggested a mentor should focus on being open, honest and respectful. It can be concluded that a mentor builds self-confidence in her protégé by promoting open and direct dialogue.

In Stewart's (1994) study on the importance and satisfaction of mentors, he concluded that 80 percent of the respondents viewed professional contacts, goal assistance and providing professional networks as the most important tasks of a mentor. Although Stewart's study consisted of only 9.3 percent African American participants who had mentors, his findings further substantiated Blackwell's (1986) perception of what constituted a true mentoring relationship. Blackwell (1987) asserts and Howard-Vital et. al (1993) confirm that only one in five African American graduate students participate in a true mentoring relationship.

Jearol Holland's (1993) study on Relationships Between African American Doctoral Students and Their Major Advisor concluded African American doctoral students were involved in a variety of mentoring relationships with some being more effective than others. The most prevalent relationship was identified as one of academic guidance, where the student was given basic academically related guidance and advice. Seven percent of the respondents had career mentoring relationships where the mentor went beyond the call of duty purposely to prepare the student for careers in higher education. This "true" mentor actively socialized and networked the protégé into his field of study laying a detailed roadmap for the protégé to become personally knowledgeable of professionals in the field; thus, enhancing his ability to communicate with scholars directly without feelings of inhibition. These findings substantiate a need for more "true" mentoring relationship for the African American graduate student. It can be concluded that the closer a protégé has to a "true" mentoring relationship, the closer he will become in completing his goals. Daniel Levinson (1978) reports that being a role model is one of the most important functions of being a mentor and it is this aspect of the relationship that causes a positive impact on the protégé's development. The role model teaches, sponsors, guides, counsels, and supports the protégé in order to help him facilitate the "realization of his dreams" (p. 98). Although this theory has merit, it also has limitations when dealing with African Americans in academe (Blackwell, 1987; Blackwell, 1989; Willie, 1991; Stewart, 1994). Anderson and

Ramey (1990) deny the possibility of role models becoming mentors. Role models usually provide only passive encouragement to the protégé, whereas, the mentor is an active participant providing a direct influence on the protégé's development.

Role models possess special qualities or characteristics the protégé desires to acquire. The role model may not even suspect that he is being observed by others, much less have knowledge that silent observers desire to emulate him. This within itself negates the possibility that any relationship exists between the role model and the potential protégé, thus limiting any chance of initiating a mentoring relationship. This is not to state role models cannot be mentors. If a role model is to be considered a mentor, he must become an active participant in the protégé's career; he may not remain a silent participant.

Granovetter (1972, as cited in Faison, 1996) asserts that bonding is the key to the mentoring process and it does not necessarily require one specific strong bond. It can contain an accumulation of several weak bonds. Although Emerson (1962) agrees with Granovetter, he states a strong relationship between faculty members and African American graduate students is essential. Faison (1993) reports that many African American graduate students desire a strong bond with African American faculty because it is believed they will respect and understand the need of the African American graduate student. Charles Willie, Grady and Hope (1991) assert that individuals tend to link with mentors who have similar personal characteristics. The basis for mentoring is commonalty; mentoring has a same-race tendency (Levinson, 1978; Blackwell, 1983; Blackwell, 1987; Blackwell, 1989; Willie et al 1991; Stewart, 1994).

Mentoring the African American Graduate Student

Linking or bonding is a significant problem for African American graduate students at predominantly white institutions. These students are physically, culturally, and socially different from their Anglo academic community, thus warranting a significant support structure. Gallimore, Tharp & John-Steiner (1990) stated mentoring relationships are marked by "individuals possessing enough interpersonal attraction to initiate a joint activity

and to cement it together" (p. 20). This opportunity for African Americans is infrequent and many times nonexistent.

Jenkins' (cited in Faison, 1996) study on cross-racial communication found African American graduate students welcomed the opportunity to be mentored by any "caring faculty member who would take a personal interest in them" (p. 22). It also found many African American students felt white faculty members were not interested in helping them develop a research agenda, nor were they available to identify academic weaknesses. In order to gain the appreciation and/or attention of white faculty members, the African American graduate student had to have his academic agenda in focus before actively seeking advice. Unfortunately, the African American students felt white faculty members were nonresponsivie to their individual needs (cited in Faison, 1996) and insensitive to their need for community.

Without proper guidance at the graduate level, African American students are limited in their preparation for entry into academe. Many tenure track positions are based upon the ability to publish and present at conferences. Smith & Davidson's (1992) study on student development and mentoring relationships found very few African Americans present at conferences or even attempt publishing. It also reported one-third of its respondents did not receive any professional development from university faculty or the wider academic community, limiting the African American graduate student's preparation for entry into academe (Smith & Davidson, 1992).

## Method

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze whether mentoring, as studied through multiple behavioral dimensions of faculty functions and student self-report, is related to satisfaction and whether different elements are important for different groups, particularly African American and Anglo American graduate students

at predominantly white institutions. Specifically, the following research questions are addressed:

Quantitative

1. Do individuals who have mentors receive high levels of faculty services verses those who do not? Are African American students receiving the same amount of services as their Anglo peers?

2. Is having a mentor or the functions of mentoring directly related to the student's satisfaction with their graduate experience and does this vary by race/ethnicity?

3. Is ethnicity directly related to student satisfaction and level of mentoring.

Qualitative

Did faculty members effectively help mediate the academic culture and assist in your success at your degree granting institution?

Sample

A census sampling technique was utilized to complete this study. The researcher chose the participant sample for the express purpose of securing a specific type of participant. Ninety-two surveys were mailed to members of the Minority Mentor Program and Office of Black Student Affairs at one predominantly white private graduate institution in Southern California. Electronic mail was utilized as a follow-up instrument.

Eighty surveys were hand delivered to the Department Dean at another predominantly white private institution in the same geographic location. These surveys were then distributed to faculty members to be given to their cluster group of students. Returned stamped envelopes were provided to each participant.

Ninety-six surveys were returned for a fifty-six (56) percent response rate. Forty-four (44) respondents were African American, twenty-four (24) were Anglo-American, ten (10) were Asian, eight (8) were Hispanic/Latino, and ten (10) listed their ethnicity as other or missing. For the purpose of this study, African American and Anglo American participants will be highlighted.

Instrumentation

In the survey, students were asked to evaluate: (1) satisfaction with their institution, (2) mentoring functions received at their institution and who rendered these services, (3) student perception of mentoring.

Data were collected using one questionnaire instrument and by conducting interviews through open-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed to obtain data on mentoring dimensions rendered to doctoral students by faculty members. The survey consisted of 42 closed-ended questions and 1 open-ended question.

Two methods was used to assess mentoring: (1) single self-report item (Do you have a faculty mentor?), (2) scale of 26 items. A single scale to assess mentoring was developed using 26 items from the survey (Table 1). The responses dealt with who provided specific elements of mentoring to the participant. Items were highly correlated; Crombach's alpha was .8730. A relational score of 20 - 26 denoted an excellent mentoring relationship; 15 - 19, a good mentoring relationship; 10 - 14, a fair mentoring relationship; 1 - 9, a poor mentoring relationship.

A scale to assess satisfaction was developed using four items from the questionnaire. The items were (1) overall impressions of the graduate experience, (2) overall quality of the classes taken, (3) overall value of what was learned, and (4) recommendation of program to a friend. The questions were highly correlated showing an internal reliability of .8324. Each of these items was coded to form a three-point scale, which ranged from above my expectations to below my expectations. The value of the scale ranged from four to twelve with the low score meaning "high satisfaction" (1 - 4 = extreme satisfaction; 5 - 8 = moderate satisfaction; 9 - 12 = low satisfaction). This scale was recoded to create a "satisfaction level" using a four-point scale, which ranged from extreme satisfaction to poor satisfaction. The value of the level ranged from one to four with the high score meaning extreme satisfaction.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was utilized to determine the percentage of participants who (1) had a mentor and (2) desired a mentor. Multiple regression analysis was performed regressing satisfaction on each of the 26 independent variables. In order to test between group differences of those who have a mentor verses those who do not, independent t-test were performed.

Pearson's r was utilized to establish a correlation between faculty mentoring and satisfaction with the graduate experience. Mentoring was measured by two different methods: (1) student self-report, (2) scale of mentoring functions.

Stepwise multiple regression was used to determine the relationships between the independent variables (i.e., services rendered by faculty members and perception of graduate experience) and the dependent variables (mentoring and satisfaction) for racial status. The stepping probability of "F" criterion entrance index was .05 with a removal index of .10. Mean substitution was utilized for all missing data. To deter multicollinearity, tolerance levels were set at .30.

## Results

Mentoring

50% of all participants stated they have a faculty mentor. 13% stated they were uncertain if they have a faculty mentor while 37% stated they did not have a mentor (Table 1). It can be assumed if you are uncertain whether you have a mentor, you probably do not have one. Therefore, 50% of all participants did not have a mentor. 61.4% of all African Americans stated they did not have a faculty mentor, while 37.5% of all whites stated they did not have a faculty mentor.

Analyses of variance revealed Black students received far less services from faculty members than Anglo students did. This disparity is evident in the difference in percentage totals of services received by participants (Table 2). There was 31 to 36 percentage point difference between African American and Anglo Americans on three mentor functions; 21

to 24 percentage point difference on five functions, and 12 to 16 percentage point differentiation on four mentor functions. Of the 26 functions mentors performed, African Americans were outdistanced by Anglo-Americans 67% of the time.

23% of all respondents had an excellent mentoring relationship; 17% had a good relationship; 26% a fair relationship and 34% had poor or no mentoring relationship. Ethnicity varied on this factor. 16% of all African American and 30% of all Anglo Americans had an excellent mentoring relationship, 9% and 21% respectively had a good relationship; 23% African Americans and 33% Anglo Americans had a fair relationship while 52% African American and 17% Anglo Americans had poor to no mentoring relationship.

Prediction of Mentoring

The regression analyses indicated that for all groups, ten factors contributed to the prediction of having a faculty mentor (Table 3). These factors varied by ethnicity. For African Americans three factors contributed to the prediction of having a faculty mentor: (1) stage in the graduate program, (2) assistance in establishing your goal, (3) practical knowledge of the discipline. For all white groups, the "facilitation of personal/interpersonal needs" was the most prominent predictor for having a mentor while "assistance in establishing a goal" was more prevalent for Blacks (Table 4 - 5).

Satisfaction

25% of all respondents had high satisfaction with their graduate experience; 57% had moderate satisfaction, and 18% had low satisfaction. This varied by ethnicity. 22% African American and 25% Anglo-American had high satisfaction; 50% African Americans and 67% Anglo-Americans had moderate satisfaction while 28% African Americans and 8% Anglo-Americans had low satisfaction with their graduate experience.

Prediction of Satisfaction

Three factors predicted satisfaction for the graduate experience with ethnicity being a significant predictor (Table 6). There was slight variation by ethnicity (Table 7 - 8).

"Overall impression of the graduate experience" was the most powerful predictor for both groups. "Having a mentor" was a significant predictor for African Americans at the .01 level. For Anglo-Americans the function of providing "wealth of knowledge, experience and professionalism" was a significant predictor at the .002 level.

Satisfaction and Mentoring

Twelve mentor functions were significantly correlated to satisfaction (Appendix B). "Of these, five functions were significantly correlated at .01 level of significance: (1) provide a wealth of knowledge, experience, and professionalism, (2) provide an introduction into professional networks, (3) give constructive criticism of your academic progress, (4) provide feedback on writing and oral communication skills, and (5) provide the knowledge of how to get things done in the department.

The simple question, "Do you have a faculty mentor?", was not significantly correlated to satisfaction.

Qualitative Analysis

It is important to note that many respondents had plenty to state in their open-ended question. It is the researcher's opinion that these students needed an outlet to relieve the stress and tension they have been carrying throughout their academic career. The responses varied from none, one word, or two page essays. The researcher will attempt to paint a vivid picture of what the respondents were attempting to articulate. The participants responded to the following question, "How has contact with faculty members contributed to your success or lack of success at your graduate institution."

The open ended question allowed the researcher, though limited, the opportunity to capture descriptors of the participant's view about the phenomena under investigation. The emergence of descriptors or themes came as a result of the researcher's intimate relationship with the data and literature. The question elicited unstructured responses from the participant allowing them, in essence, to tell about their experience, perspective and ideas about faculty at their degree granting institution.

Deviations from traditional grammar in the open ended responses were purposely not corrected. It was deemed important that the voice of the participant remained unsilenced.

Many Anglo American students presented themes of encouragement, support and guidance. One student responded:

> Faculty members within my program have been very encouraging throughout my graduate experience at ___. Constant contact with faculty members have, I believe, provided me with the necessary tools to become a successful scholar.

Others explored themes of "system navigation" and personal support. An Anglo student responded:

> Faculty members were supportive, patient, nurturing in guiding my development as a scholar.
>
> I have learned some of the pitfalls that awaits me in the teaching environment.
>
> A new prof took an interest in me - without this, I'm unsure I would have finished.

Several African American students found faculty members to be supportive inside the classroom and have encouraged participation in scholarly endeavors, but lacked contact outside those arenas.

> Faculty members have mentioned during class that my work is quite good, could be published or has the scope and breath to become a qual; however, no significant or encouragement has taken place outside of class.

Others contend many faculty members gave them self-confidence to continue in the program.

> In general my experience at ___ has not been the most pleasant. However, my faculty mentor is outstanding. He has been the only person in my dept., faculty-wise who has supported me more than I could possible express. when faculty members told him I wasn't worth the effort (they still do and I'm now in my 4th year), he set out to prove them wrong. He is the sole reason I've been successful and remain here at ___.

Since 61.4% of all African Americans in this study proclaimed they did not have a faculty mentor, it is important to note their responses regarding faculty at their degree

granting institution and determine if these responses are in agreement with the quantitative analysis.

Most African Americans declared there was a lack of personal support from faculty members. This was quantitatively confirmed through analyses of variances . There was a 35 percent difference between Anglo Americans and their African American peers on this dimension. Some responses included:

> So far I've had limited contact with faculty members.
>
> Faculty at my institution didn't place much faith in my ability to make in academia which made me all the more determined to succeed.
>
> I learned to be very independent due to the lack of support from certain faculty members.
>
> ___ is not known for its support of students. If you get it, you're set. If not, it really sucks.

Others proclaimed faculty members did not support them in their professional development nor take a genuine interest in them as a scholar. Analyses of variance showed the disparity among African American and Anglo American students were substantial having a differential of 27 and 31 percentage points respectively. Many African American students wrote openly about their discontent with their faculty.

> Black Ph.D. students are basically left in the wind to fend for yourself. We must find our own mentoring relationships, our own research & publishing opportunities, our own teaching experiences . . . and basically anything we need to expand our careers, we are left with our own devices to find.
>
> In an already difficult and rigorous academic environment, this lack of services leaves the mediocre student almost "damned to fail".
>
> Lack of success --the faculty does not support most of their students. The vast majority are devastated emotionally and not transitioning into the workforce published scholars. Faculty spends too little time with Ph.D. studs.
>
> Faculty at my institution didn't place much faith in my ability to make it in academia which made me all the more determined to succeed.

Still others contend faculty members do not help facilitate their personal and interpersonal needs to withstand the rigors of the program, therefore, lowering their self-esteem. The disparity between African American and Anglo Americans was 16 and 24 percentage points respectively. African American students declared:

> I will be considering a transfer away from ____.
>
> Faculty at my institution didn't place much faith in my ability to make in academia
>
> My contact with faculty members have been strictly on a student/professor level. Never have any of the relationships moved into what I would consider a viable and constructive mentoring relationship
>
> Very little up to this semester because I did not receive the support I needed.
>
> With most, it has not been a very pleasant experience. As an African American female in a white, male dominated atmosphere, many tend to place you in a "category" before exploring who your are, your interest and capabilities. ____ has been a disappointment in that

Jenkins (1983) reported African Americans welcomed the opportunity to be mentored by any caring faculty member who took a personal interest in them. It is interesting to note, one Anglo American's reaction to his predominantly white faculty.

> I am scared to talk to them. It seems like most people know what they want to do w/ this degree but I don't & feel lost!

It can be generalized feelings of isolation and lack of community are not race sensitive.

## Limitations of Study

In generalizing about the findings of this study, one should note the level of participation from underrepresented students at both institutions. This low participation rate may skew the findings; however, interpretations are also being reported by single group analysis. A slight institutional confound might be present whereas race was overlapped; however, this study is considered preliminary in nature and represents results

that could be significant to the profession. Methods of collecting data differed from institution to institution depending on policies specified by individual institutions.

This study attempted to explore in-depth levels of mentoring as perceived by the participant. Two points of view were noted. Participant's definition of mentoring was self-imposed and participants could access mentoring dimensions from various sources other than faculty.

## Conclusions and Implications

African American graduate students continue to face obstacles at predominantly white institutions. The feeling of isolation, lack of support services, and the general knowledge of knowing the playing field is unequal has hampered African American students. The findings from this study indicated African American students are in search of programs that are willing to be accepting of their differences and academic needs. Although mentoring programs are not a guaranteed success model, they are one essential ingredient in the solution to a much bigger dilemma. Traditionally, African Americans have been conditioned to fail (Woodson, 1990). The most perfectly executed mentor program cannot erase the barriers white American has placed before the African American community. Lack of Black faculty and staff, a general lack of understanding for diverse cultures, and administrators who do not hear or listen to the needs of their African American students continuously help orchestrate an obstacle course of destruction for the culturally disadvantaged graduate student. This is evident in the increased attrition rate of African American graduate students at predominantly white institutions.

Properly administered, a mentor program encourages and prepares the protégé to grow and develop into a well-grounded intellectual. The conflicting theory of what a mentoring relationship should encompass has left the definition of mentoring to chance.

The definition and function of a mentor has to be well defined so that all parties involved will be aware of their duties and responsibilities.

Little is known about African American graduate student's expectations from a mentor relationship. Researchers need to empirically and qualitatively study what African American graduate student want, need, and expect from a mentor relationship. If an understanding of student expectations were known, researchers could measure the success ingredient and develop a concrete definition of mentoring.

Different types of mentoring should also be addressed. Does mentoring have to be a "one to one" relationship? The concept of multiple partners should be explored. With faculty member's strict schedules and the increasing number of students entering graduate programs, it is unrealistic to think one person could be everything to everyone. It is possible that a group of interested, caring partners could adapt a program whereas, the protégé could receive mentoring from different individuals without compromising the integrity of the relationship. This "parmentor" program would include various members from the academic community: junior and senior faculty, upper and same level peer, financial aid assistants, writing coordinator, and counselors to name a few. Properly executed the student will develop relationships of varying degrees from each partner. Pilot programs should be developed to test the validity of this concept.

One-third or more of all college and university faculty will retire over the next decade (Leon, 1993). A new cohort of young, gifted scholars will be expected to accept the responsibility of disseminating knowledge to the next generation of students. Mainstream faculty will be able to gracefully leave academe knowing they have left this challenge to totally qualified and prepared individuals if effective mentor programs or dimensions of mentoring have been established. Institutions must stop saying they are doing their best and finally do what is necessary to ensure the retention and graduation of their African American graduate student.

## Appendix A
## Functions of Mentoring
## Provides:

Advice and guidance about the educational program
Emotional support and encouragement
Support in professional development
Facilitation of personal/interpersonal need
Genuine interest in your development as a scholar
Constructive criticism of your academic progress
Opportunity to write and co-publish with them
Feedback on writing and oral communication skills
Knowledge of how to get things done in the department
information regarding employment opportunities
Assistance in establishing your goal
Introduction into professional networks
Opportunities in research, publishing, and teaching
Insight about dynamics of formal and informal systems with the institution
Information to place problems into historical, cultural, and philosophical perspective
Professional contacts as potential references after graduation
A long lasting relationship outside of academe
Convey a wealth of knowledge, experience, and professionalism
Personal support and respect
Opportunities to create a more intense and personal relationship
Tools to enhance your self-confidence
Support for your career choices
A practical knowledge of the discipline
Encouragement to attend graduate and professional conferences
Recommendations for fellowships and internships
Exposure to prominent practitioners in the field

## Appendix B

### Mentoring Functions Significantly Correlated to Satisfaction

| | |
|---|---|
| convey a wealth of knowledge, experience, and professionalism | .42** |
| introduced into professional networks | .36** |
| provide constructive criticism of your academic progress | .35** |
| provide feedback on writing and oral communication skills | .31** |
| instill knowledge of how to get things done in the department | .29** |
| provide personal support and respect | .27 |
| exert a genuine interest in your development as a scholar | .25 |
| provide support in your professional development | .24 |
| provide assistance in establishing goals | .24 |
| provide advice and guidance about the educational program | .23 |
| provide opportunities in research, publishing, and teaching | .23 |
| provide for exposure to prominent practitioners in the field | .23 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
All others are significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 1**
**Percentage of participants who have a faculty mentor**

| | All Institutions |
|---|---|
| Black | 38.6 |
| White | 62.5 |
| Asian | 81.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 42.9 |
| Other | 60 |
| All Races | 50 |

**Table 2**
**Percentage of Students who received services**

| Function | All Races | Whites | Blacks | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| exposure to prominent practitioners in the field | 66 | 91 | 55 | 36 |
| personal support and respect | 61 | 83 | 48 | 35 |
| genuine interest in scholar development | 72 | 98 | 67 | 31 |
| support in professional development | 46 | 57 | 30 | 27 |
| information to place problems in historical, cultural & philosophical perspective | 60 | 70 | 46 | 24 |
| tools to enhance your self-confidence | 52 | 65 | 41 | 24 |
| constructive criticism of your academic progress | 71 | 87 | 64 | 23 |
| assistance in establishing your goal | 46 | 57 | 36 | 21 |
| facilitation of personal/interpersonal needs | 32 | 43 | 27 | 16 |
| advice and guidance about educational program | 78 | 87 | 73 | 14 |
| wealth of knowledge , experience & professionalism | 69 | 70 | 64 | 14 |
| knowledge of how to get things done in the department | 54 | 61 | 49 | 12 |

**Table 3**
**Prediction of Having a Faculty Mentor**

| Variable | Beta | t | Sig t |
|---|---|---|---|
| assistance in establishing your goal | .28 | 3.27 | .0016 |
| introduction into professional networks | -.29 | -3.37 | .0011 |
| insight about dynamics of formal and informal systems within institution | .24 | 2.82 | .0060 |
| personal support and respect | .23 | 2.76 | .0070 |
| perception of having a mentor | .81 | 3.83 | .0002 |
| consider oneself to mentor outside academe | -.61 | -2.84 | .0056 |
| faculty will enhance graduate experience | -.21 | -2.86 | .0053 |
| would like a mentor | -.21 | -2.64 | .0053 |
| overall impression of graduate experience | .23 | 2.97 | .0038 |
| father's educational background | -.17 | -2.24 | .0275 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Multiple R | .75 | F | 10.90 |
| R Square | .56 | Sig F | <.0001 |
| Adjusted R Square | .51 | N | 96 |

**Table 4**
**Prediction of Having a Faculty Mentor**
**African Americans**

| Variable | Beta | T | Sig T |
|---|---|---|---|
| stage in the graduate program | -.24 | -2.12 | .0397 |
| assistance in establishing your goals | .64 | 5.60 | .0000 |
| practical knowledge of discipline | .31 | 2.76 | .0088 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Multiple R | .71 | F | 13.58 |
| R Square | .50 | Sig F | <.0001 |
| Adjusted R Square | .47 | N | 44 |

**Table 5**
**Prediction of Having a Faculty Mentor**
**Anglo Americans**

| Variable | Beta | T | Sig T |
|---|---|---|---|
| facilitation personal/interpersonal needs | .50 | 2.73 | .0122 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Multiple R | .50 | F | 7.45 |
| R Square | .25 | Sig F | .0122 |
| Adjusted R Square | .22 | N | 24 |

**Table 6**
**Prediction of Satisfaction**

| Variable | | Beta | T | Sig T |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| perception of having a mentor | | -.13 | -2.0 | .0477 |
| overall impression of graduate experience | | .75 | 11.66 | <.0001 |
| ethnicity | | -.13 | -2.05 | .0432 |
| Multiple R | .79 | F | 5.24 | |
| R Square | .63 | Sig F | .0000 | |
| Adjusted R Square | .61 | N | 96 | |

**Table 7**
**Prediction of Satisfaction**
**African Americans**

| Variable | | Beta | T | Sig T |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| perception of having a mentor | | -.21 | -2.49 | .0169 |
| overall impression of your graduate experience | | .82 | 9.53 | .0000 |
| Multiple R | .83 | F | 47.10 | |
| R Square | .70 | Sig F | <.0001 | |
| Adjusted R Square | .68 | N | 44 | |

**Table 8**
**Prediction of Satisfaction**
**Anglo Americans**

| Variable | | Beta | T | Sig T |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| wealth of knowledge, experience & professionalism | | .42 | 3.42 | .0026 |
| overall impression of your graduate experience | | .61 | 5.00 | .0001 |
| Multiple R | .86 | F | 29.55 | |
| R Square | .74 | Sig F | <.0001 | |
| Adjusted R Square | .71 | N | 24 | |

**Table 9**
**Satisfaction Correlated with Faculty Services**
**Percentage of Services Received**

| Function | Correlation | All | White | Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| wealth of knowledge, experience and professionalism | .42 | 69 | 70 | 64 |
| introduction into professional networks | .36 | 51 | 56 | 47 |
| constructive criticism of your academic progress | .34 | 71 | 87 | 64 |
| feedback on writing & oral communication skills | .31 | 75 | 83 | 74 |
| knowledge of how to get things done in the department | .29 | 54 | 61 | 49 |
| personal support and respect | .27 | 61 | 83 | 48 |
| genuine interest in you development as scholar | .25 | 72 | 98 | 67 |
| exposure to prominent practitioners in the field | .23 | 66 | 91 | 55 |
| assistance in establishing goal | .23 | 46 | 57 | 36 |
| support in your professional development | .23 | 46 | 57 | 38 |
| advice & guidance about your educational program | .23 | 78 | 87 | 73 |
| opportunities in research, publishing & teaching | .22 | 48 | 44 | 51 |

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